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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON

May 5, 1954



MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE HONORABLE
ALLEN DULLES, DIRECTOR
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Attached for your information is an eyes only
telegram received from the American Embassy, London.

Attachment:

Copy No. 5 of TS Telegram
No. 4882, dated May 4 from
the American Embassy, London.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM*Department of State*~~TOP SECRET~~D
ActionControl: 1258
Rec'd: May 4, 1954
4:07 p.m.

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SS
Info

FROM: London

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 4882, May 4, 5 p.m.

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SENT DEPARTMENT 4882, REPEATED INFORMATION PRIORITY PARIS 672.

EYES ONLY THE SECRETARY

EYES ONLY RHINEHART FOR GENERAL GRUENTHER

General Collins and Admiral Wright lunched with Winston Churchill May 3 and have jointly prepared following memorandum of conversation. They asked that copies be passed to Department Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"1. Present at the luncheon in addition to the Prime Minister were Lord Alexander, Minister of Defense; First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. J. P. L. Thomas; General J. Lawton Collins and Admiral Jerauld C. Wright.

"2. Prime Minister's reaction to recent statement by Mr. Cole:

A. Sir Winston Churchill greeted us with a reference to a public statement made by Mr. Sterling Cole, Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy in New York on Thursday, April 29th. Sir Winston said that it was too bad that he had to receive information from the public press of the nature outlined by Mr. Cole. Major points arose during the conversation which will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

B. Sir Winston sent for a copy of the statement (which General Collins and Admiral Wright did not have the opportunity to examine), extracts from which he read to us at lunch. He particularly emphasized the portions referring to the equivalent weight of explosive that could be carried now by a single aircraft, the terrific power of the hydrogen bomb and the fact that Mr. Cole estimated that not more than one fourth of the bombers which might attack the United States would be shot down. Sir Winston referred to the much greater proximity of the British Isles to Soviet Russia and said that if these statements of Mr. Cole were correct how much greater was the threat to England.

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C. The
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-2- #4882, May 4, 5 p.m., from London.

C. The Prime Minister again referred to his concern over having to get such information from the public press. General Collins stated that actually there was not much more in Mr. Cole's statement than had been already said by General Vandenberg, either before Congressional committees, or in a public statement about a year or so ago. Sir Winston said that he had not noted Vandenberg's statement and later asked if he could obtain a copy of it. General Collins promised to see if he could obtain one.

D. The Prime Minister's conclusion from Mr. Cole's statement was that if Mr. Cole was right, America's power of retaliation could, and possibly would, be wiped out by an initial Soviet attack and that this would, therefore, have to change the whole American military policy.

E. General Collins then said that it appeared to him as if Mr. Cole was considering the potential power of the Soviets posed against the present relatively inadequate defenses of the United States to meet a Soviet air attack. Lord Alexander seemed also inclined to discount the effectiveness against the United States of an initial Soviet attack. Our impression was that Lord Alexander was not so nearly disturbed over Mr. Cole's statement as Sir Winston appeared to be.

"3. Mr. Churchill's reference to the British decision not to participate in the defense of Dien Bien Phu:

A. Mr. Churchill referred to the fact that the nearest British carrier was in the Mediterranean and that he was convinced that the total naval air forces which could be mustered, which he said would total not more than about 170 (referring apparently to United States navy airplanes), could not be decisive to prevent the fall of Dien Bien Phu. He said that since intervention would not be decisive, the British were opposed.

B. Mr. Churchill spoke with some bitterness with reference to the French failure to send anyone except volunteers to Indochina and to the French lack of skill in committing such valuable forces, including the bulk of their Foreign Legion, to the defense of an isolated post such as Dien Bien Phu and then calling upon their friends to bail them out.

C. Neither General Collins nor Admiral Wright made any comment with respect to the Prime Minister's statement. Each of them had earlier made clear that he had no responsibility for anything that transpired outside the NATO setup.

"4. Mr. Churchill's reference to EDC and German participation therein:

A. Mr. Churchill

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A. Mr. Churchill spoke of the relative impotence of the NATO forces in Central Europe without German participation. He again referred critically to the French who, after initiating the concept of EDC, were now apparently doing everything to block it.

B. Lord Alexander said he was convinced that the French never had any idea that EDC would be anti-red and had merely proposed it to delay the re-arming of Germany.

C. There then followed some discussion of the importance of a land defense of Central Europe as far to the east as possible. General Collins pointed out that this was essential to the defense of Britain in a modern war and ventured the suggestion that not just one British armored division, but every available British division could better be employed on the Continent than left in garrison in the British Isles. Lord Alexander generally agreed with this, but the Prime Minister, reverting to British experience in the last war, said that it would be necessary to retain forces in England for defense against an airborne invasion.

D. It was clear that the Prime Minister really knew little of NATO's defense plans and had little confidence in the ability of the forces available to prevent the over-running of Western Europe.

E. Both the Prime Minister and Lord Alexander referred to the possibility of taking Germany into NATO or developing some other vehicle for the re-arming of Germany. Lord Alexander even referred to the possibility of a combination of British, German and American military forces for the defense of Western Europe. General Collins pointed out the impossibility of a defense based upon such forces alone without France, since the logistical support of forces in Europe must pass through France."

BUTTERWORTH

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NOTE: Mr. Kitchen (SS) informed, 5/4/54, 5:55 p.m., CWC/FED

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